

Suffering in Silence: Examining Society's Perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence

Thesis

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Abstract

Little is known about male victims of intimate partner violence. The purpose of this project was to explore societal attitudes that these men might encounter. The current project utilized a cross-sectional survey design administered using an anonymous, web-based response system (Qualtrics). Given a set of narrative vignettes describing different examples of relationship violence, participants were asked to determine on a 5-point scale how “appropriate” the character’s behavior was in each of 11 interactions. Half of the vignettes (odd numbers) described a man’s (Michael) actions toward a woman (Denice) and half were framed the opposite (even numbers). Half of the survey participants completed this form of the survey and half completed a version which reversed the roles of Michael and Denice (evens and odds). Final results (n=16) indicated that male participants viewed three different behaviors as being less “serious” than did female participants. These three behaviors were: slapping their partner, grabbing the partner, and telling their partner that they shouldn’t be talking to anyone but them when out in a social setting. Results also indicated that in three instances, participants in the helping professions scored three behaviors as being “more serious” than did other participants. These behaviors included, slapping a partner, grabbing a partner, and one partner forcing the other partner to kiss them in a public setting. Understanding and studying societal biases that exist toward these men will help social workers address barriers which may prevent them from seeking help and develop interventions to meet their needs. It is also important to understand the attitudes concerning Michael as a victim versus Denice as a victim for the very same reason.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Joseph Rielinger and Lisa Mobley. From the very beginning, they have been a steadfast source of motivation to follow my dreams and to fight for what I believe in.

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First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest thanks to my mentor, Dr. Audrey Begun. From the very onset of this project, her consistent support and helpful advice have been an invaluable asset. I would like to thank the College of Social Work for providing me with this incredible opportunity, especially Dr. Sheila Barnhart, Dr. Audrey Begun, and Dr. Gretchen Clarke-Hammond who taught me the mechanics of how to engage in research. I would also like to thank Jennie Babcock, whose support of both me as a student and me as a person went a long way in seeing this project through to success. And finally, to Theresa Lesak, whose encouragement, support, and willingness to listen throughout the whole process kept me grounded.

Curriculum Vitae

June 2013.....Saint Ignatius High School

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Chapter 1: Statement of Research Topic

Introduction

Intimate partner violence is a social issue which can often be seen through the paradigm of female victims and survivors. However, this is not always the case. Researchers and government agencies have started directing attention to a different paradigm regarding male victims. The researcher wished to add to the knowledge base which exists on this issue by answering the question, “What attitudes and opinions exist in the general public regarding male victims of intimate partner violence?” This is an important and relevant question to ask because this issue has not been studied sufficiently, to the detriment of this population faced with multiple issues which cause significant harm.

One of the most compelling reasons to study this population is the effects which experiencing intimate partner violence can have on men. Hogan, Hegarty, Ward, and Dodd (2012) performed a critical examination of the experience of counsellors who work with male victims of intimate partner violence. In their report, they cited several consequences for men suffering this kind of abuse, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, poor quality of life, poor health status, and an increased risk of suicide and substance misuse (p.44). There is also a need to give counselors and social service professionals who already are working with these men the best information possible. Hogan et al. (2012) identified several themes which emerge in the experience of counselors who work with male victims of IPV (or relationship violence), some of which include surprise and a call for better representation (p.48). While these counselors use their experience and all of their training to deliver the best possible care to their clients, any attempt to further understand the issues facing these men would aid the counselors in providing better services.

The current knowledge base has significant gaps. For example, the survey study completed by Drijber (2013), in part, attempted to identify what barriers existed to male victims of domestic violence seeking treatment (p.173). She identified the most important reason being that men were afraid that the police would not believe them (p.173). Identifying this as a barrier is a monumental step for helping these men; however, no one has attempted to understand the attitudes behind this fear. Going beyond the police and into the court system reveals another gap in the current knowledge base. Muller, Desmarais, and Hamel (2009) reported that, in examining 157 temporary restraining order requests from a California district court, “judges were almost 13 times more likely to grant a [Temporary Restraining Order] TRO requested by a female plaintiff against her male intimate partner, than a TRO requested by a male plaintiff against his female partner” (p.625). Although there was some discussion that this tended to fall along allegations of low levels of violence, this study did not examine whether or not this had to do with any inherent bias on the part of the judges.

The Suffering in Silence Study has filled a piece of this gap and set up further research. The current knowledge base describes the gender disparities which exist; however, the current study went further. Understanding and studying biases that exist about this population will help to address barriers which may prevent these men from seeking help. This understanding will help set up further research for deconstructing those biases and developing intervention approaches to meet the needs of the men who experience relationship violence.

Statement of the Problem

There are few known statistics about this population. The number of men who experience intimate partner violence is detailed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC). This organization conducted a survey in 2010 entitled the, “National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.” This report stated that, “more than 1 in 4 men (28.5%) in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime” (p.12). This figure given by the CDC survey illustrates a clear and present need to understand the aspect of underreporting as well. Babette Drijber (2013) noted in her survey of this population of men, “only 15% of the victims officially reported it [to the police]” (p.175). With underreporting rates being so high, it is entirely possible that true percentage of men who experience this kind of violence could be much higher.

Despite statistics about the size of this population, there exists a large amount of unsubstantiated information. While the CDC has identified one rate at which this issue occurs, Hines and Douglas (2009) stated that a national crime statistics survey found 1.3 per 1,000 men were assaulted by an intimate partner (p.573). The authors also note, however, that this figure is affected by underreporting because a lot of men may not necessarily view the violence that they experience in a relationship as constituting a crime (p.574). The same authors also cite the rate of intimate partner violence against men coming from another national survey, this one stating that 0.8% of men have experienced intimate partner violence (p.574). This percentage has been disputed, however, as a certain portion of the test specifically asks about participants’ opinions on the severity of violence committed by men (p.574). Combining all of these different estimates, and other estimates which exist, paints a very confusing picture. With different agencies and surveys examining this phenomenon from different timelines, it is unclear as to what the true rates of incidence and prevalence are. And this confusion holds devastating consequences; if no one can agree on how many men there are within this population to begin with, it is incredibly difficult for social service agencies to figure out how to best help them.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine what attitudes about male victims of intimate violence can be found in the general population. Specifically, the study seeks to determine how seriously different types of intimate partner violence are viewed, especially as it relates to the gender of the victim. The study also sought to determine whether or not a relationship existed between participants' views on intimate partner violence and demographic identifiers of participants. The study utilized a cross-sectional design online survey.

The information gathered from this exploratory study could be used in the future in several aspects. Primarily, the conclusions could be used as a basis for future interventions on both the micro and macro scale. Understanding how society views men in abusive relationships could inform treatment professionals who are looking to help men on an individual basis navigate their social system to access the sources they need. And on a macro scale, the conclusions of this study could drive policy interventions and awareness campaigns. With education and effort, this issue can garner public support and resources to further help these men.

Research Question

1. What are the societal attitudes regarding male victims of intimate partner violence?
 - a. Are potentially abusive behaviors perceived differently (as being less serious) when the target is a man versus a woman?
 - b. Do men and women view potentially abusive behaviors differently?
 - c. Do members of helping professions view potentially abusive behaviors differently from other individuals?

In this exploratory study, the researcher wanted to examine and quantify what attitudes exist regarding male victims of intimate partner violence. First, the study examined how participants view intimate partner violence from the traditional paradigm of men harming women. This is an important variable to identify because it helps to establish a baseline for a participant's attitudes towards the subject matter. The second variable which the survey measured is a participant's attitudes towards the opposite paradigm, women harming men. Analyzing participant beliefs on the importance of this issue will yield valuable results in two dimensions. To begin with, attitudes towards these men and the situations they face can tell a lot about the kind of environment which these men have to deal with outside of their abusive situations. These data can tell the story of possible barriers to treatment which these men might face. It could also lead to community-level interventions to help change attitudes. A comparison between the data of men being harmed and women being harmed could also be useful in that it could help to justify paying attention to these men.

Finally, this survey analyzed the demographic identifiers of age, racial/ethnic background, gender, level of education, and occupation (helping profession or not). This information was collected in order to determine respondent demographic effects. Determining these effects are important for a few reasons. One important reason is that, as previously stated, it could help practitioners begin to understand the barriers to treatment which these men face out in the world. Another reason is that it could help guide practitioners who are working with these men. For example, if the data show age, gender, or race/ethnicity differences, then this research could set up other research determining how different populations of different backgrounds deal

with these men. If practitioners understand these behaviors, it will help them navigate the client's social system better.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Treatment for Male Victims of IPV

In the relatively recent past, there has been a shifting trend as it relates to treatment services available to victims of intimate partner violence. While there used to only be services and treatment routes for female victims, studies have shown that more and more resources are becoming available for male victims. The study completed by Cheung, Leung, and Tsui (2009) involved a web-based search for services available to these men. According to their findings, “services for male victims must address such factors as secretiveness, cultural values, masculine identity, tolerance, shame, and loss of face” (pg.447). In this research team’s analysis, these treatment recommendations were the factors which truly demonstrated an ability to help these men, as evidenced by the fact that these resources are still in operation at the time the research was completed.

It has also been demonstrated that, although men in abusive relationships will sometimes seek treatment, it is more to seek treatment for an outcome of the violence, rather than treatment for the violence itself. An example of this can be found in the case study written by Ananthakrishnan, Alagappan, and Riyat (2006). Their case study detailed the treatment of a 46-year-old man who was complaining of pain on the right side of his chest and shortness of breath. Upon being x-rayed, it was revealed that this man had several fractured ribs in different stages of healing. When further discussed with the patient, he revealed that his female partner had been hitting him, but he declined to get police or social services involved (pg.428). This case illustrates a disturbing trend in which men prefer to at least try to lie about the sources of their injuries.

Self-Perception of Violence and Circumstances

In a study done by Babette Drijber (2013), a group of 372 men who had been in abusive relationships were asked to talk about who they told about their relationships, who they did not tell, and the reasoning behind those decisions. Of the 372 men who participated in this study, 82% did not report their abuse to the police. Of these men who chose not to report, 41% listed their reason why they chose not as fear that they would not be believed by the police (pg.176). This is an important finding because it counters the idea that men have no intentions of reporting their abuse. Rather, it is the perceptions of these men as it relates to their reception in the services which are supposed to help them, but may not actually help them.

Barriers to Treatment

It is important to study and acknowledge whatever reasons exist that men in abusive relationships are not getting treatment. And it is important to recognize that at least one of these reasons is that men encounter barriers in their journey to receive help. Hall (2012) believes that, “the inability to acknowledge male victims of domestic violence is attributed less to personal preference and more to cultural traditions of the West...” (pg.7). He believes that it is society which needs to have a shift in thinking, rather than any individuals, in order to help these men access treatment. Believing that welfare has become “feminized,” he asserts that the only way to move past this “feminization” begins with acknowledging the signs and symptoms of men in abusive relationships (pg.7).

These barriers have been determined to play out in settings which, in a perfect world, would be the first place that men in abusive relationships would receive help. For example, a study was completed in a California district court which found that, “judges were almost 13 times more likely to grant a TRO requested by a female plaintiff against her male intimate

partner, than a TRO requested by a male plaintiff against his female partner” (Muller, pg.625). Whatever the causes of this discrepancy may be, the fact that such a discrepancy exists represents a major barrier to seeking treatment for men in abusive relationships. The court has demonstrated, in that particular area, that it is unwilling to recognize the signs and symptoms of men who are in these abusive relationships, thus men were unable to get what could have been a vital resource in breaking free of their abusive relationship.

Summary Statement

Taking all of the previously written literature about this population together paints a difficult picture for male victims of intimate partner violence. It is clear from this previous research that a significant number of men have been unwilling to seek help from authorities (Drijber 2013). The services which men should be accessing for help are often, either intentionally or unintentionally, discriminating against them (Muller, 2009). Men in abusive relationships are seeking help from a “feminized” social welfare system which has been inherently stacked against them as a result of Western cultural values (Hall 2012).

While previous studies have hinted that men confessing to others about their abusive relationships would not be met with belief or understanding (Drijber 2013), this assertion has never been directly studied. Services which are available to men in these circumstances have targets related to treatment goals (Cheung et. al., 2009), these services need to be run by persons who are in a proper state of mind to fully help these men.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design

This project followed a cross-sectional survey design. The survey guided participants in an examination of their attitudes regarding male victims of intimate partner violence. This was ascertained through the use of narrative vignettes. Given a set of narrative vignettes describing different examples of relationship violence, participants were asked to determine on a 5-point scale how “appropriate” the behavior is. Half of the vignettes (odd numbers) described a man’s (Michael) actions toward a woman (Denice) and half were framed the opposite (even numbers). Half of the survey participants completed this form of the survey and half completed a version which reversed the roles of Michael and Denice (evens and odds). Finally, each participant will be asked two qualitative questions. The first question asked participants what the impact on their answer would have been had the gender of the actors in the last scenario been reversed. And the second question will ask participants to list the three things they believe helping professionals need to know to help male victims of intimate partner violence.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board at The Ohio State University to perform this research study. Approval was also sought from small business owners in the city of Cleveland in order that the researcher might utilize their storefronts for recruitment purposes.

Qualtrics was used to host the survey online. The survey was accessed by participants on their own personal electronic device at their convenience. The researcher approached individuals around the Ohio State University campus and locations in the city of Cleveland, asking persons

who appeared to be over the age of eighteen if they would like to hear more about the survey. If they stated that they were interested, they were given a complete description of the survey and a flier which listed the survey's URL and QR code. Participants were told that they could stop taking the survey at any time. Participants were also informed that, if they should decide to partake in the study, they were able to enter a drawing for a \$10 Amazon gift card, received electronically. The funding to purchase these gift cards was obtained through the Ohio State University College of Social Work's one thousand dollar research stipend. The recruitment poster can be viewed in Appendix A, and the recruitment script can be viewed in Appendix B.

Measures

Because no other study has attempted to study this aspect of intimate partner violence, especially with the study's emphasis on gender, the researcher created an original survey instrument for this project. This survey was based on an unpublished Safe at Home Violence Against Women and Girls attitudes survey. The survey was designed with three sections, one quantitative, one qualitative, and one demographic. The sections were designed as follows.

Quantitative

The quantitative section of the survey began with two screening questions. The first screening question was, "Are you currently over 18 years of age?" This was included as a screening question for two reasons. To begin with, intimate partner violence is a very serious topic, and it was deemed not appropriate to discuss such a topic with children. Additionally, the researcher wanted to eliminate any and all parental or caregiver influence in the opinions given. The second screening question was, "Are you fluent in reading and understanding English?" This was included because the survey was only available in English, and the researcher wanted to avoid any language barriers affecting the survey process. If participants answered yes to both

questions, they were taken to the consent form. If they answered no to either question, they were taken to a general response which stated they were not eligible to take the survey.

After the consent form, the participant was presented with 11 different hypothetical scenarios involving two hypothetical actors, Denice and Michael. The 11 scenarios were as follows:

1. Denice and Michael are having a big argument. Denice says she doesn't want to talk about it anymore and turns to walk away. Michael grabs her and forces her to stay. Michael's behavior is . . .
2. Michael shows up late for a date with Denice. She yells at him and calls him a ##%@@@!
Denice's behavior is. . .
3. Michael gets a ride home from work with Cheryl. Denice tells him that if he ever does it again, she'll know he's cheating on her. Denice's behavior is . . .
4. Denice and Michael go to a party together. Michael sees Denice talking to Robert. He tells her, "When you're with me, you don't talk to anybody else." Michael's behavior is...
5. Denice and Michael are having a big argument. Denice says she needs some time to think about it and cool down. She tells Michael she will call him later that night. Denice's behavior is . . .
6. Denice plans to spend Saturday afternoon with her friends. Michael is upset and says she shouldn't need other people when she has him. Michael's behavior is . . .
7. Michael and Denice move in together. Denice manages their money, and Michael must ask her every day for money to buy lunch at work or make other purchases. Denice's behavior is.
. .

8. Seeing news about a celebrity couple getting divorced, Michael makes Denice promise not to break up with him or else he will harm himself. Michael's behavior is . . .
9. More often than not, Denice is the person who starts intimate behavior. If Michael tries to tell her that he's not in the mood or doesn't feel comfortable, she teases him and makes fun of him for not being, "man enough." Denice's behavior is. . .
10. Denice and Michael are having an argument. Michael says something insulting about Denice's family, so in response, she slaps him. Denice's behavior is . . .
11. Denice and Michael are at a party. Michael is bragging to his friends about his girlfriend. To show off in front of his friends, he grabs Denice and kisses her, even though he knows this makes her uncomfortable. Michael's behavior is . . .

Upon reading through each of these given scenarios, participants were asked to rate each behavior on a five point Likert scale. The scale utilized is as follows,

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

After scoring each of these hypothetical behaviors, participants moved on to the qualitative portion of the survey. The quantitative portion of the survey was given out in two different forms. Form A of the survey contained the questions listed above, while Form B had the exact same wording of the behavior with Michael and Denice's roles switched. Each form of the survey was evenly distributed amongst the participants.

Qualitative

The qualitative portion of the survey contained two questions. The first question read on Form A, “Regarding the answer you just completed, please state what impact it may have had on you if Denice was the one who was grabbing Michael and kissing him.” On Form B, the roles of Michael and Denice were reversed. The final question of the qualitative portion of both forms of the survey read, “What do you believe are the 3 most important things for professionals in the human services to know about men who are being abused by their intimate partners?”

Demographic

The final portion of the survey was a set of demographic questions. The questions read as follows:

Are you...?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other (Please Indicate)
- ☐ Prefer Not to Answer

What is your age?

Are you...?

- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Black/African
- ☐ American Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Prefer not to Answer

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Some schooling/no high school diploma
- High school diploma or the equivalent (ex. GED)
- Some college, no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional/Doctoral degree

Which of the following best describes your career choice?

- Behavioral Health Services (Ex. Counseling, Psychology, Social Work, etc.)
- Health Services (Ex. Nurse, Medical Doctor, Medical Technologist, etc.)
- Criminal Justice (Ex. Police Officer, Lawyer, Judge, etc.)
- Not one of these helping professions

After the demographic questions, participants were given debriefing information about seeking support through a nationwide intimate partner violence hotline, along with information on how to request a debriefing page for the survey and how to enter into the raffle drawing for the \$10 Amazon gift card.

Informal Pilot Survey

After the survey tool had been drafted, it was sent out to a convenience sample of 10 people in order to give true participants an accurate description of the time duration of the survey, correct any unclear wording, and to ensure that the Qualtrics formatting was free of technical issues. The ten participants gave a verbal report after taking the survey regarding their thoughts and comments on the survey. After making minor adjustments from their feedback, the final version of the survey was created and used for data collection. The final survey is found in appendices D and E.

Data Analysis

The data were collected online through the Qualtrics database, then exported into SPSS v.24. The data were cleaned for missing responses, including two participants who were given both screening questions, but were then taken immediately to the end of the survey despite passing both questions. The origin of this technical issue is unknown. All statistical analyses run within SPSS utilized a confidence interval of $\leq .05$.

To analyze the data received during this project, several steps were undertaken. To begin with, frequency distributions were used to descriptively analyze the characteristics of the survey participants. This was done for two reasons. First, there was a need to evaluate the study's generalizability. Frequency distributions were also necessary before beginning statistical analysis related to the two forms of the survey. In addition, these distributions informed analyses comparing helping professionals and participants who are not members of a helping profession.

In order to analyze the survey results, several steps were taken. First, the two versions of the question were compared on each of the eleven items using a *t*-test. Utilizing this test allowed the researcher to determine if there was a significant statistical difference in participants'

opinions given the same relationship situations with only the genders of the actors reversed. Next, mean scores for each scenario were calculated for both male and female participants. These means were compared using an independent samples *t*-test. Mean scores for each vignette were also calculated for participants both in a helping profession and not in a helping profession. These means were compared using an independent samples *t*-test.

After these analyses, the final two questions of the survey were analyzed by the process of simple thematic coding. The process of simple thematic coding allowed for the identification of other attitudes on male victims of intimate partner violence which had not been previously identified by the research team or which were not able to be accurately assessed by the narrative vignettes.

Chapter 4: Results

Demographics of the Sample

The sample collected consisted of 16 participants, with an age range of 18-42, and an average age of 24 years. The sample was mostly Caucasian (87%), followed by Asian/Pacific Islander (13%). The sample was split equally between males (50%) and females (50%). Most participants had either a bachelor's degree (38%) or some college with no degree (31%). A majority of participants identified themselves as being within the helping professions (62.5%). Complete demographics are shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. Description of the Sample

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Gender	Male	8	50.0	50.0
	Female	8	50.0	50.0
	Total	16	100.0	100.0
Race/Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	14	87.5	87.5
	Asian/Pacific Islander	2	12.5	12.5
	Total	16	100.0	100.0
Education	High school diploma or the equivalent (ex. GED)	2	12.5	12.5
	Some college, no degree	5	31.3	31.3
	Associate degree	2	12.5	12.5
	Bachelor's degree	6	37.5	37.5
	Master's degree	1	6.3	6.3
	Total	16	100.0	100.0
Occupation Description	Health Services (Ex. Nurse, Medical Doctor, Medical Technologist, etc.)	10	62.5	62.5
	Other	6	37.5	37.5
	Total	16	100.0	100.0

Research Q. 1: What are the societal attitudes regarding male victims of intimate partner violence?

With regard to the first area of qualitative analysis, scores from all participants were grouped together based on which form of the survey they took, and within each form, the scores were combined to form a mean value for each of the 11 scenarios.

Table 2. Form Version Descriptive Statistics

Version of Survey Form Completed: A or B		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
grabs	A	9	3.5556	0.88192	0.29397
	B	7	3.4286	0.97590	0.36886
late for a date calling person names	A	9	3.4444	1.01379	0.33793
	B	7	3.7143	0.95119	0.35952
jealous after ride with other	A	9	3.2222	0.83333	0.27778
	B	7	3.5714	0.97590	0.36886
when with me don't talk to anyone else	A	9	3.7778	0.83333	0.27778
	B	7	3.8571	1.06904	0.40406
healthy time out	A	9	1.0000	.00000 ^a	0.00000
	B	7	1.0000	.00000 ^a	0.00000
shouldn't need others	A	9	3.2222	0.83333	0.27778
	B	7	3.4286	0.78680	0.29738
in control of money	A	9	2.8889	1.16667	0.38889
	B	7	3.0000	1.00000	0.37796
stay together or harm myself	A	9	4.2222	0.83333	0.27778
	B	7	4.0000	0.81650	0.30861
make fun of for not wanting intimate behavior	A	9	4.2222	0.66667	0.22222
	B	7	3.7143	1.11270	0.42056
slaps after insult	A	9	4.1111	1.16667	0.38889
	B	7	5.0000	0.00000	0.00000
forced kiss in public	A	9	3.5556	1.23603	0.41201
	B	7	3.0000	1.15470	0.43644

The mean scores of each question on Form A were compared to the mean scores of each corresponding question on Form B using an independent samples t-test. With a confidence interval of $\leq .05$, no statistically significant results were calculated from this analysis.

After the analyses between the different form versions were completed, the researcher attempted to run statistical analyses related to scores given on the survey and different demographic characteristics given. However, due to the small sample size, age, race, and educational background of the participant were not able to be meaningfully analyzed. Gender and type of occupation presented two areas with enough variance so as to examine the relationship between scores given and these two demographic identifiers.

In order to calculate the relationship between gender of the participant and scores given to the hypothetical behaviors, all participants were grouped into their corresponding categories of male or female. Once grouped, these scores were combined to form a mean value for each of the eleven scenarios within that group. Each of the mean scores were compared to the corresponding mean scores of the other group using an independent samples *t*-test. Based on these analyses, three statistically significant findings were identified.

In the instance of a partner grabbing their significant other to keep them from walking away from an argument, male respondents viewed that behavior as being less serious ($M=3.00$, $SD=0.756$) than did female respondents ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.756$), where $t(14)=-2.646$, $p\leq.05$. In the instance of a partner telling their significant other that when they are with them somewhere they shouldn't talk to anyone else, male respondents viewed that behavior as being less serious ($M=3.25$, $SD=0.707$) than did female participants ($M=4.375$, $SD=0.744$), with $t(14)=-3.10$, $p\leq.05$. In the instance of a partner slapping their significant other after being insulted, male respondents viewed that behavior as being less serious ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.195$) than did female participants ($M=5.00$, $SD=0.000$), with $t(14)=-2.37$, $p=.05$. A table showing the mean scores with descriptive statistics in this analysis is shown below.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics by Participant Gender

Male or Female		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
grabs	Male	8	3.0000	0.75593	0.26726
	Female	8	4.0000	0.75593	0.26726
late for a date calling person names	Male	8	3.2500	1.03510	0.36596
	Female	8	3.8750	0.83452	0.29505
jealous after ride with other	Male	8	3.1250	0.64087	0.22658
	Female	8	3.6250	1.06066	0.37500
when with me don't talk to anyone else	Male	8	3.2500	0.70711	0.25000
	Female	8	4.3750	0.74402	0.26305
healthy time out	Male	8	1.0000	.00000 ^a	0.00000
	Female	8	1.0000	.00000 ^a	0.00000
shouldn't need others	Male	8	3.0000	0.53452	0.18898
	Female	8	3.6250	0.91613	0.32390
in control of money	Male	8	2.7500	1.16496	0.41188
	Female	8	3.1250	0.99103	0.35038
stay together or harm myself	Male	8	3.8750	0.83452	0.29505
	Female	8	4.3750	0.74402	0.26305
make fun of for not wanting intimate behavior	Male	8	4.0000	0.75593	0.26726
	Female	8	4.0000	1.06904	0.37796
slaps after insult	Male	8	4.0000	1.19523	0.42258
	Female	8	5.0000	0.00000	0.00000
forced kiss in public	Male	8	2.8750	0.99103	0.35038
	Female	8	3.7500	1.28174	0.45316

In order to calculate the relationship between the occupational type of the participant and the scores given to the hypothetical vignettes, all participants were grouped into their corresponding categories of either being in a helping profession or not being in a helping profession. Once grouped, these scores were combined to form a mean value for each of the eleven scenarios within that group. Each of the mean scores were compared to the corresponding mean scores of the other group using an independent samples t-test. Based on these analyses, three statistically significant findings emerged.

In the instance of a partner grabbing their significant other to keep them from walking away, respondents in the helping professions viewed that behavior as being more serious ($M=3.90$, $SD=0.738$) than did participants from other professions ($M=2.83$, $SD=0.753$), where $t(10.49)=2.764$, $p\leq.05$. In the instance of a partner slapping their significant other after being insulted, respondents in the helping professions viewed that behavior as being more serious ($M=5.00$, $SD=0.000$) than did participants in other professions ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.21$), with $t(14)=3.568$, $p\leq.05$. In the instance of a partner forcing their significant other to kiss them in a public setting, respondents in the helping professions viewed that behavior as being more serious ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.23$) than did participants in other professions ($M=2.50$, $SD=0.548$), and $t(14)=2.424$, $p\leq.05$. A table showing the mean scores with descriptive statistics is shown below.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics by Occupation

Which of the following best describes your career choice?		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
grabs	Helping Professional	10	3.9000	0.73786	0.23333
	Other	6	2.8333	0.75277	0.30732
late for a date calling person names	Helping Professional	10	3.8000	0.78881	0.24944
	Other	6	3.1667	1.16905	0.47726
jealous after ride with other	Helping Professional	10	3.5000	0.97183	0.30732
	Other	6	3.1667	0.75277	0.30732
when with me don't talk to anyone else	Helping Professional	10	4.1000	0.87560	0.27689
	Other	6	3.3333	0.81650	0.33333
healthy time out	Helping Professional	10	1.0000	.00000 ^a	0.00000
	Other	6	1.0000	.00000 ^a	0.00000
shouldn't need others	Helping Professional	10	3.5000	0.84984	0.26874
	Other	6	3.0000	0.63246	0.25820
in control of money	Helping Professional	10	3.3000	1.05935	0.33500
	Other	6	2.3333	0.81650	0.33333
stay together or harm myself	Helping Professional	10	4.3000	0.82327	0.26034
	Other	6	3.8333	0.75277	0.30732
make fun of for not wanting intimate behavior	Helping Professional	10	4.1000	0.99443	0.31447
	Other	6	3.8333	0.75277	0.30732
slaps after insult	Helping Professional	10	5.0000	0.00000	0.00000
	Other	6	3.6667	1.21106	0.49441
forced kiss in public	Helping Professional	10	3.8000	1.22927	0.38873
	Other	6	2.5000	0.54772	0.22361

In the qualitative analysis, thematic coding brought up several themes which have significance. To begin with, in regard to the first qualitative question, there was general uniformity in the answers given. Of the 16 respondents, 14 of them stated that reversing the roles of the two actors in the final vignette would not have changed the score they had originally assigned. Two participants confirmed that it would have changed their answers. Both of these two participants had been given the original scenario of Michael forcing Denice to kiss him. They both stated that, had the scenario would have been reversed to Denice forcing Michael, they would have viewed that reversal as being less serious.

For the final qualitative question, there was again general uniformity in answers given by participants. All sixteen participants stated that helping professionals needed to understand that for male victims of intimate partner violence, the experience of coming forward about their circumstances can be incredibly emasculating. Participants also brought up other concepts, such as the idea that abuse can be more than just physical, that men may feel that they can handle their given situation, and that women can be just as abusive to men as men can be to women.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary of the Results

As time goes on, more and more attention will be given to male victims of intimate partner violence. As more awareness and resources are dedicated to this population, it is an important foundation to see whether or not the individuals in charge of these resources are in a frame of mind conducive to helping these men in the best way possible. This study attempted to quantify whether or not this accepting frame of mind exists within the general public. This study also attempted to determine whether or not there was a relationship between attitudes regarding intimate partner violence and male victims, and certain demographic characteristics. Identifying any relationships that existed between demographics and attitudes could go a long way in helping male victims navigate their own social environments.

This study did not find any statistically support for the idea that people in the general population view intimate partner violence as being more serious when committed against a woman than when it is committed against a man. The researcher believes that this is in large part due to the small sample size. It is believed that, with a much larger sample size, results within this realm of analysis may emerge.

This study did identify a relationship between gender of the participants and scores given to certain hypothetical vignettes. It was found that men perceived several of the behaviors as being less of a concern than did women, regardless of the gender of the victim. This is important to recognize because it supports the findings of Hines and Douglas (2009), who said that underreporting occurs within this population because men do not necessarily recognize abusive behaviors as being abusive.

The study did find a relationship between the nature of a participant's occupation and the scores assigned to the hypothetical vignettes. This relationship is important to recognize as well because, in a sense, it contradicts aspects of the previous study by Muller et. al. (2009). Although Muller et. al. found a bias in the helping professionals tasked with ruling on TRO's, the helping professionals in this study viewed abusive behaviors as being more serious than others outside of the helping professions, regardless of the victim's gender. Helping professionals, it seems, are in a better mindset to receive these men than others.

Limitations

The study presents with several limitations. Primary among the limitations of this study is the lack of generalizability. The small sample size (n=16) limits the researcher's ability to generalize the findings calculated in this study to the general population. The survey instrument itself also represents a limitation of this study. Because the survey was an original instrument created by the researcher, it was not able to be tested for reliability and validity within the project's time frame of completion. Finally, the study is limited in that all the relationship vignettes presented in the survey instrument were in the context of a heterosexual relationship. Male victims of intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships represent a population which is also under-recognized, and the findings of the study do not speak to the attitudes which exist about that population.

Implications

The findings of this study have several implications related to social services. To begin with, this study shows a need to raise awareness of intimate partner violence. With raised awareness, and education regarding what constitutes intimate partner violence, the general public

can begin to experience an attitude shift regarding violence against men in relationships. Men can start to view relationship violence as a serious issue, regardless of who it happens to. All people can start to keep an eye out on their friends, family, and loved ones for signs that a man in their life may be a victim of an abusive relationship.

The findings of this study also go a long way to support the education and training received by workers in the helping professions. Persons in the helping professions have demonstrated, within the context of this study, their ability to receive men who have been abused in relationships with an accepting attitude. Because these professionals view abusive behaviors as being more serious than persons outside of the helping professions, it speaks well to the treatment any man in an abusive relationship would receive from these professionals.

Conclusion and Future Research Recommendations

It is the hope of the research team that this study can be used as a foundation for other studies and interventions in the future. This study explored the attitudes which exist in the general public regarding intimate partner violence, especially male victims. It was found that men do not view certain abusive behaviors as being as serious as women do, and it was found that professionals in helping occupations viewed certain behaviors as being more serious than persons outside of the helping professions.

If future studies were to build on this study, it is hoped that those studies would be able to recruit a larger, more diverse sample. Future studies would also need to test the survey instrument for reliability and validity.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Poster



**SUFFERING IN SILENCE: EXAMINING
SOCIETY'S PERCEPTION OF INTIMATE
PARTNER VIOLENCE**

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY THROUGH OSU

- Complete an online survey regarding attitudes on intimate partner violence.
- Survey should take only 15 minutes
- Participants can enter for a chance to win a \$10 Amazon Gift card

Thank you for your interest in this study.
Follow the link below or scan the QR code to access the study.

https://osu.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_03dxJSgXAsQ9l4N



Questions? Contact Andrew Rielinger (rielinger.2@osu.edu)

Appendix B: Oral Recruitment Script

Good afternoon,

My name is Andrew Rielinger and I am a fourth-year social work student here at Ohio State. I'm currently conducting my senior thesis on attitudes about intimate partner violence. Would you like to participate? To be clear, no questions will be asked about any experiences with intimate partner violence. In order to participate, you must be over the age of eighteen and be comfortable using written English. The survey can be found online using this link or this QR code. It is expected to only take fifteen minutes to complete the survey, but you can feel free to skip any question if you do not wish to answer. You can enter for a chance to win a ten dollar giftcard to Amazon.com. Please take a flyer with the survey link on it, or if you prefer, you can participate right here and now using this Ipad. Do you have any questions?

Appendix C: Consent Form

The Ohio State University Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Suffering in Silence: Examining Attitudes on Intimate Partner Violence

Researcher: Andrew Rielinger and Dr. Audrey Begun, College of Social Work

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Your participation is voluntary. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to mark your consent at the bottom of this page.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine societal attitudes regarding intimate partner violence. No questions will be asked about any personal experiences with intimate partner violence.

Procedures/Tasks: You will be asked to fill out a survey with fifteen questions regarding the subject matter and five demographic identifiers. Please note that as a participant, you are not required to divulge any information that makes you feel uncomfortable. Feel free to skip any question which you do not wish to answer.

Duration: Filling out the survey is expected to take between ten and fifteen minutes. You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The Ohio State University.

Risks and Benefits: There are no anticipated direct benefits to you associated with participating in this survey. The research team recognizes that if you or someone you know is currently living in a situation of domestic violence or have been in the past, discussing this topic might be painful for you. Please be aware that under no circumstances are you obligated to complete this survey. If this survey should make you uncomfortable, feel free to withdraw your participation at any time.

Anonymity: This is an anonymous survey. This means that no personally identifiable information will be collected during the survey process.

Incentives: If you so desire, at the end of this survey you can enter for a chance to win an Amazon electronic gift card in the amount of ten dollars. All that is required to enter for this drawing is a valid email address. This is not mandatory for survey completion and will be collected in a separate survey linked to the main survey. If you decide to enter this email

drawing, your given email address will not be linked to your responses in any way. A participant's odds of winning a gift card are at least 1:2.5.

Participant Rights: You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status. If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study. This study has been determined exempt from IRB review.

Contacts and Questions: For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, or you feel you have been harmed as a result of study participation, you may contact Andrew Rielinger (Co-Investigator) rielinger.2@osu.edu Audrey Begun (Principal Investigator) 614-292-1064 begun.5@osu.edu For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

Consenting to the Study:

I have read this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study.

- ☐ Yes, I consent to participate
- ☐ No, I do not consent to participate

Appendix D: Survey Tool Form A

Are you currently over 18 years of age?

1. Yes
2. No

Are you fluent in reading and understanding English?

1. Yes
2. No

(After Consenting to Participate)

The following is a list of different situations which happen while Michael and Denice are dating. Read each situation carefully, then choose the option which you think best describes Michael's or Denice's behavior. There are no right or wrong answers.

Q8 Denice and Michael are having a big argument. Denice says she doesn't want to talk about it anymore and turns to walk away. Michael grabs her and forces her to stay. Michael's behavior is . . .

6. Appropriate
7. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
8. A Warning Sign
9. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
10. Abusive

Q9 Michael shows up late for a date with Denice. She yells at him and calls him a ##%@@! Denice's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q7 Michael gets a ride home from work with Cheryl. Denice tells him that if he ever does it again, she'll know he's cheating on her. Denice's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q8 Denice and Michael go to a party together. Michael sees Denice talking to Robert. He tells her, “when you’re with me, you don’t talk to anybody else.” Michael’s behavior is...

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q9 Denice and Michael are having a big argument. Denice says she needs some time to think about it and cool down. She tells Michael she will call him later that night. Denice’s behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q10 Denice plans to spend Saturday afternoon with her friends. Michael is upset and says she shouldn’t need other people when she has him. Michael’s behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q11 Michael and Denice move in together. Denice manages their money, and Michael must ask her every day for money to buy lunch at work or make other purchases. Denice’s behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q12 Seeing news about a celebrity couple getting divorced, Michael makes Denice promise not to break up with him or else he will harm himself. Michael’s behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive

5. Abusive

Q13 More often than not, Denice is the person who starts intimate behavior. If Michael tries to tell her that he's not in the mood or doesn't feel comfortable, she teases him and makes fun of him for not being, "man enough". Denice's behavior is. . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q14 Denice and Michael are having an argument. Michael says something insulting about Denice's family, so in response, she slaps him. Denice's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q15 Denice and Michael are at a party. Michael is bragging to his friends about his girlfriend. To show off in front of his friends, he grabs Denice and kisses her, even though he knows this makes her uncomfortable. Michael's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q34 Regarding the answer you just completed, please state what impact it may have had on you if Denice was the one who was grabbing Michael and kissing him.

- 1.

Q35 What do you believe are the 3 most important things for professionals in the human services to know about men who are being abused by their intimate partners?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q23 Are you...?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other (Please Indicate)
- ☐ Prefer Not to Answer

Q24 What is your age?

Q25 Are you...?

- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Black/African
- ☐ American Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Prefer not to Answer

Q26 What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- ☐ Some schooling/no high school diploma
- ☐ High school diploma or the equivalent (ex. GED)
- ☐ Some college, no degree
- ☐ Associate degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Professional/Doctoral degree

Q18 Which of the following best describes your career choice?

- ☐ Behavioral Health Services (Ex. Counseling, Psychology, Social Work, etc.)
- ☐ Health Services (Ex. Nurse, Medical Doctor, Medical Technologist, etc.)
- ☐ Criminal Justice (Ex. Police Officer, Lawyer, Judge, etc.)
- ☐ Not one of these helping professions

Appendix E: Survey Tool Form B

Are you currently over 18 years of age?

1. Yes
2. No

Are you fluent in reading and understanding English?

1. Yes
2. No

(After Consenting to Participate)

The following is a list of different situations which happen while Michael and Denice are dating. Read each situation carefully, then choose the option which you think best describes Michael's or Denice's behavior. There are no right or wrong answers.

Q29 Denice and Michael are having a big argument. Michael says he doesn't want to talk about it anymore and turns to walk away. Denice grabs him and forces him to stay. Denice's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q30 Denice shows up late for a date with Michael. He yells at her and calls her a ##%@@! Michael's behavior is. . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q31 Denice gets a ride home from work with Thomas. Michael tells her that if she ever does it again, he'll know she's cheating on him. Michael's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q32 Denice and Michael go to a party together. Denice sees Michael talking to Jessica. She tells him, "when you're with me, you don't talk to anybody else." Denice's behavior is...

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign

4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q33 Denice and Michael are having a big argument. Michael says he needs some time to think about it and cool down. He tells Denice he will call her later that night. Michael's behavior is . .

.

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q34 Michael plans to spend Saturday afternoon with his friends. Denice is upset and says he shouldn't need other people when he has her. Denice's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q35 Michael and Denice move in together. Michael manages their money, and Denice must ask him every day for money to buy lunch at work or make other purchases. Michael's behavior is. .

.

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q36 Seeing news about a celebrity couple getting divorced, Denice makes Michael promise not to break up with her or else she will harm herself. Denice's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q37 More often than not, Michael is the person who starts intimate behavior. If Denice tries to tell him that she's not in the mood or doesn't feel comfortable, he teases her and makes fun of her for not being, "woman enough". Michael's behavior is. . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q38 Denice and Michael are having an argument. Denice says something insulting about Michael's family, so in response, he slaps her. Michael's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q39 Denice and Michael are at a party. Denice is bragging to her friends about her boyfriend. To show off in front of her friends, she grabs Michael and kisses him, even though she knows this makes him uncomfortable. Denice's behavior is . . .

1. Appropriate
2. Between Appropriate and a Warning Sign
3. A Warning Sign
4. Between a Warning Sign and Abusive
5. Abusive

Q39 Regarding the answer you just completed, please state what impact it may have had on you if Michael was the one who was grabbing Denice and kissing her.

- 1.

Q40 What do you believe are the 3 most important things for professionals in the human services to know about men who are being abused by their intimate partners?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q23 Are you...?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other (Please Indicate)
- ☐ Prefer Not to Answer

Q24 What is your age?

Q25 Are you...?

- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Black/African
- ☐ American Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Prefer not to Answer

Q26 What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- ☐ Some schooling/no high school diploma
- ☐ High school diploma or the equivalent (ex. GED)
- ☐ Some college, no degree
- ☐ Associate degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Professional/Doctoral degree

Q18 Which of the following best describes your career choice?

- ☐ Behavioral Health Services (Ex. Counseling, Psychology, Social Work, etc.)
- ☐ Health Services (Ex. Nurse, Medical Doctor, Medical Technologist, etc.)
- ☐ Criminal Justice (Ex. Police Officer, Lawyer, Judge, etc.)
- ☐ Not one of these helping professions